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## LITURGICAL CHANGE: INTERVIEW WITH CARDINAL RITTER

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## Mission Reflections

Any Catholic anywhere, concerned about the Church's mission everywhere, might profitably reflect on Joe Breig's remarks in *Ave Maria* (Nov. 7, 1964). My own reactions added up to something like this:

1. Numerical or statistical tests, while valuable, can be misleading and sometimes impertinent in measuring spiritual accomplishments. Zeal and human cooperation are necessary factors, but the Spirit "breathes where He will, and does not explain His breathing to us."

2. The ecumenical movement, whatever our convert statistics, will extend the influence of the Church, increase co-operation between Christian denominations, and produce open mindedness in the general public. It will lessen hostility and prejudice against the Church. Catholic ecumenism, I might add, has already accomplished these objectives to an unprecedented degree.

3. The Ecumenical Council has made us "much more conscious than we have been of the supernatural in religion and in conversion," and "of the mystery which lies at the heart of the Church." (Just compare our older books of popular apologetics with what is being said at Rome!)

4. Statistics shed little light on the inner forces at work in conversion and even less on the *quality* of the conversions we do record.

5. Do we believe Vatican II is a blessing or not? If it represents the Catholic episcopate united with Peter's successor and is guided by the Holy Spirit, can we be lukewarm towards its deliberations and decisions? Doesn't the Council deserve our gratitude, prayer and cooperation? Who would wish to close a single window opened by John XXIII?

6. The Catholic missionary spirit is as wide as the world. Its vision extends beyond merely local losses or gains. It starts wherever the Church is and it gazes to the ends of the earth—wherever there are people who do not really know Christ. It has concern for one's own neighborhood but also for China, India, Africa and South America.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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# Liturgical Change:

## An Interview with

### Cardinal Ritter

Donald Quinn

**Q.** Your Eminence, most Catholics have heard of changes coming in the liturgy, especially as they relate to Mass. They continue to ask why we are making these changes. What is the motivation of the Church in making them?

A. Well, it's the motivation of the council. In the prelude of the Constitution on the Liturgy, it is stated that the council desires the Church to be alerted and to be adapted to our times and also to show forth the Church in a better light to the world. So the council is prompted to bring about the reform and the promotion of the liturgy. It is not only the reform, but the promotion of the liturgy that is called for.

**Q.** The promotion is important then?

A. Oh, very much so, very much so. That is what has been lacking. But in order to promote the liturgy better, the reform must first take place. And the Constitution states, too, in the introduction or prelude, that it stands to reason that in adapting the liturgy to our times there would be changes because of modern conditions. Through the years there are bound to have been intrusions of things that are out of

harmony with the spirit of the liturgy; or perhaps things emphasized some aspect of doctrine that is no longer pertinent; or perhaps something that might be disturbing.

**Q.** What would be some example of these intrusions?

A. Well, I don't know whether it is going to be changed, but take for instance, the Consecration. We interrupt the Consecration; we don't realize that. After the priest says the words over the species of bread, he genuflects. That is disturbing that rite. Our Lord surely at the Last Supper didn't make a genuflection. Of course, He wouldn't make it to Himself as God. But we make a genuflection and then elevate the host, and then genuflect again. The whole ceremony there really takes away the memorial aspect of the Eucharist—the dinner aspect, the supper aspect. That isn't the only as-

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pect of the Eucharist, but it is a dinner, and we want to restore the Mass as a supper.

Q. You say that isn't the only aspect of the Mass?

A. Our Lord instituted the Eucharist as a supper. But because He said over this food, "This is My Body." He made it a sacrifice by that. He merely said that this is the Body that would be given and the Blood that would be shed, indicating the sacrifice of the Cross to come the next day, so that the Last Supper became a sacrifice as well as a supper.

Q. Are there other examples of changes coming?

A. There are certainly many duplications in the Mass. We're making many signs of the cross that are unessential; we're genuflecting, turning around—all those things that are confusing to the people. Non-Catholics seeing it say, "What are they doing here?" Our actions don't really indicate what it is that we are doing.

Q. How did these things come into the Mass?

A. They crept in one by one, as an overzealous pope, congregation, or some group of bishops wished a certain thing to be done and it was not contrary to the essential elements of the Mass. Of course, these changes are not doctrinal. Basic elements of the Mass will never be changed, but some elements are subject to change without disturbing the doctrine.

Q. This is how we can have changes now, is that correct?

A. Yes. Now, we are going to have in the Mass more Scripture reading. Probably we will have two Epistles—one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. You can't understand the New Testament without the Old Testament. Undoubtedly at one time in the Church they employed more of the Old Testament and now they are restoring it, you see. It isn't really a change; it is a restoring—a restoration.

Q. From all you have said, it would indicate that this is being done for the people, to make it clearer and to make it more meaningful. Is that correct?

A. More meaningful, to make the ceremonies of the Mass express faithfully what they represent and what they are doing, so

the people can easily comprehend what is being done.

Q. Are all these within the pastoral intentions of the Second Vatican Council?

A. Yes, of course, that is the whole purpose of the council. As Pope John said: we are not coming together to promulgate new doctrine, nor to condemn, but for pastoral reasons. He meant we are going to come to make the Church more meaningful to our people, and to the world. In other words we are coming to express more of love—love of Christ for men—as is becoming to His Church. The Church should be a Church of love. His ministers should be ministers of love. The people—the people of God—should be ministers of love, too.

## Inspired Choice

Q. The vote on the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy was overwhelming, four negative votes against 2,147. How soon did it become apparent that this was the mind of the council Fathers?

A. Well, I think that depends on the country. If you are speaking about the United States, I would say that maybe half of the bishops grasped immediately the significance of putting the liturgy first—not the meaning of the liturgy, but giving it first place. After the discussions went on, and different parts of the world were heard from, it became evident that Pope John had been inspired to put the liturgy first. We thought it was put first because it was something that we could get our teeth into without too much difficulty.

Q. A concrete matter?

A. Yes, to give us experience for future sessions of the council. But it became more and more apparent that the liturgy is of tremendous significance for what the council must accomplish for the renewal of the Church. The liturgy pertains to the very life of the Church and to the very life, the spiritual life of the people. Because it is in the liturgy that our redemption is accomplished. In the liturgy! In the Mass, in the Sacraments, Christ accomplishes our redemption. We are redeemed through the liturgy.

Q. A good liturgy then, the full sense of Christian participation, would help the people to be better Christians?

A. Oh, definitely. It is because of our failure to understand the liturgy in that light that many people regard our membership in the Church almost like belonging to a club or institution. You subscribe to certain basic doctrines and certain basic principles and you have a certain program of action. So some think we have doctrine, law and Sacraments. But that is so artificial. There is no indication there of man's encounter with God, and our association, or identification, with our Lord through Baptism and therefore into His body, into His Church. And the Sacraments are regarded simply as, well not magical, but simply as automatic things. We receive a Sacrament; we get so much grace. But the Sacrament is one of the means in which Christ reaches to us, and gives to us the redemption that He accomplished on the Cross. Of course, the redemption continues on, is going on now. Our membership is so formalized in the Church that it has lost, for many people, the real meaning of what it is to be a Catholic or what it means to be a Christian.

## People of God

Q. Is this one of the problems about the actual promulgation of the new liturgical reforms — that we really haven't understood this concept that we are the people of God?

A. I think that is pretty much it, and it doesn't pertain just to lay people; it pertains to the clergy. The liturgy will never be able to play its part in the lives of the people until the clergy receive liturgical instruction. Liturgical instruction also directs the priest to work in giving instruction to the people with great zeal and patience; this is one of the signs that they are true dispensers of the faith—if they have the proper liturgical attitude. No, the Constitution asserts specifically that this liturgical reform will never come about unless the clergy have the spirit of the liturgy and understand the liturgy. If they can't impart it to the people, the people will never get it.

Q Then do you say that we must always have a sense of the Christian community when we are participating in worship?

A. Oh yes, we come together, as Pope Pius XII said, and the liturgy is the whole

worship of the entire Mystical Body. Christ and His people; Christ and the members. When we come to Mass, it is true we come as individuals, but above all we come as the body of Christ—every parish, you might say, is a miniature Mystical Body; Christ is with them.

Q. This brings up the idea of the private aspects of Mass that seems dear to so many Catholics. First, what are the private fruits of Mass?

A. Well, first of all there is no such thing as a private Mass. A Mass, even though it is said by a priest alone, is said in union with the Church. But the whole set-up of the Mass indicates that it isn't "I," it is "we"—it is the Church that is worshiping through this minister. And as far as the individual fruits are concerned, it is true that we receive grace. But I think there is more than that.

## The New Covenant

Q. What is that?

A. The person attending holy Mass is making a commitment to our Lord. Our Lord is renewing in the Mass, through the priest, the covenant that He has with the family—with the people of God—with the individual. As the words of the Consecration say, the Lord announces that this is the covenant of the New Testament, the covenant that He made to His people in the beginning—at the time of Abraham. He continues that covenant; He has never gone back on it; it is perfected, it comes to its fullness in Christ. So I would say that the greatest fruit of the Mass for an individual is that he has become a part of the corporate worship of Christ and His Church. It is his introduction into Christ—his union with Christ because it is Christ who is offering Himself to His heavenly Father through the instrument of the priest.

Q. And the Sacraments . . . ?

A. It is Christ who baptizes. It is the power of Christ, the presence of Christ through His power of Baptism. Christ is present in Mass through the Eucharist and Consecration. Christ is present in the Mass through the Word—through the Gospel, through the Epistle. That is God speaking to us.

Q. The Liturgy of the Word is in a sense Christ's presence, too, then?

A. Yes. It is a presence of God and of our Lord. In the Mass our Lord is preaching the Gospel as He did on earth. And our Lord is present at the Mass in our singing, in our action of standing up, and all the things we do. Christ says that "where two or more are gathered in My name there I am in the midst of them."

Q. To build on this idea, what are the benefits of the Community Mass?

A. The fruits of the Mass of course depend upon the faith that you bring to the Mass. How deep is your faith? How deep is your understanding? Not only intellectual understanding, but spiritual understanding of the Mass and what transpires there. And your participation—how much do you become involved in it?

## A Family Matter

Q. Then, should people participate fully?

A. They must get involved in it. The Mass is so structured that no one can escape the idea that this is a function that requires participation. It requires participation! In the past, we have just closed the door to participation and made the Mass a kind of private affair—the priest is up on the altar and the people privileged to be present. But it is the people's Mass as well as the priest's Mass.

Q. This is what I was getting at — the people should take part. Does it add something to make the Mass a participated action of the community?

A. It can't be anything else but that. The Mass is a community affair. It can never be an individual affair. It is always the whole Church. It is not only the universal Church but the Church here in this parish. It is their assembly, their coming together to worship the heavenly Father with Christ and through Christ. In turn with that worship, Christ through the Holy Spirit brings untold graces to us. Awakening our faith—strengthening our faith and our love, our commitment to Him and to our fellow men.

Q. You seem to be saying something like the Constitution on the Liturgy says, that liturgy is the source and the summit of Christian life. What does that mean?

A. It is the source because the liturgy is the sacrifice, the whole work of Christ's redemption. It is the Mass and the Sacraments and the sacramentals plus the Scrip-

ture, the word of God. Our whole redemption is there. The redemption of man is accomplished today for me and for you—the ordinary channels we are talking about—through the liturgy. We always looked upon the liturgy as a kind of rubric, you know.

Q. And the summit?

A. It is a summit because the liturgy is the chief purpose of the Church: to render through the whole Church with Christ this homage to God and to bring redemption to the world. All else is related to this purpose.

Q. Understanding that helps. Is there any particular internal recognition a Christian must have in order to get a sense of this liturgy?

A. Surely. It would be bad if he just had external participation, if the mind didn't cooperate, if the people failed to grasp the inner significance. The reform of the liturgy must not only be external, but also internal. That is, in the individual—priest and people.

## Inner Preparation

Q. What does the Christian bring to Mass? How does he ready himself internally for full participation in the liturgy?

A. Well, the Mass itself tells you that. The Christian must prepare his soul by penance; prepare his soul—by opening it to the word of God—the Scriptures, the Gospel. He must prepare his soul—in the way our Lord said, "Remember that if you have anything between yourself and your neighbor go and reconcile yourself first before you come to the altar; and then offer your gifts." So we need charity and faith and a readiness and eagerness to encounter our Lord—to encounter God in the Mass. We go to Mass to meet our Lord; to meet the whole Church, His whole Mystical Body. We go there to become part of His whole family in the whole world. It is the homage of mankind to the heavenly Father, for which Christ came into the world—and now He has gone into heaven and continues His work. That is one thing the new realization of the liturgy and the promotion of the liturgy will bring out. It is that Christ's work of redemption was not accomplished, once and for all. It was on the Cross, by Christ's death upon the Cross. But it is

also by His Resurrection—if there hadn't been the Resurrection, His work would not have been finished. The Resurrection was the approval of the Father. His Ascension into heaven indicates that He is at the right hand of the Father, and through the Spirit is carrying on the work of the redemption from day to day. It is going on right now. Our Lord, through the Holy Spirit, is giving to the world the saving power that He merited.

## Glorified Humanity

Q. Are you saying that the liturgy will give us a better sense of the Christian religion?

A. The Church wants to lead us to a fuller understanding of Christ's work on earth and nature and work of the Church—and the meaning of Christ, first of all. Of course many people do not have the right meaning. They know that He is God but they forget His glorified humanity. They forget that He was man, and that humanity is at the right hand of God the Father, and that it is that glorified humanity that is coming down to us. Not Christ only as God, but His glorified humanity is a constant petition to the Heavenly Father for mankind. In other words we are already in heaven—mankind is, in Christ's humanity. The whole human race is. Particularly, His family—those who are baptized; who believe in Him—we are already destined for heaven.

Q. Our real understanding of the Mass and all liturgy should help us understand this?

A. The means that the Holy Spirit uses is the Church. The Church in turn has at its disposal holy Mass and the Sacraments. These are the visible signs, the visible instruments that our Lord has instituted, to show what is being accomplished in us, you see. Baptism, the water; the bread, the Eucharist; and the various words of the absolution and the forgiveness of sins; the Mass, of course, the words of consecration, the elements of bread and wine, which our Lord Himself used.

Q. The new liturgy Constitution, Your Eminence, seems to be a very charitable document . . .

A. Well, it is pastoral. It is to win all the people and priests, first of all—to win them to the acceptance of it. In other words, it

is not set up in juridical tones, in dogmatic tones—we require, we command—there is none of that in there at all. It's always persuasive.

Q. With the Constitution being such a pastoral document, let me ask this question: How mandatory is the reform it calls for?

A. Oh, it is law. It is a constitution. It's promulgated. It is as much a teaching as any of the doctrines that we have, any of our beliefs. It is not primarily a dogmatic affair, but it is mandatory.

Q. It must be heeded then?

A. Yes. For example, no priest could ignore the Constitution. If he did it would be to his own peril—not peril of the Church, but peril of the soul. After all, the council is the Holy Spirit. If we believe what we say we believe: that when the Church is assembled with its head and all the Fathers of the council—the apostles, the successors—then the Holy Spirit is bound to be with them. We pray for the council that the Holy Spirit may guide us. Well, whenever the council promulgates anything, that is its teaching. Of course, nobody deliberately ignores its decisions, they just simply don't carry them out. But that is why the document specifies that there must be liturgy commissions appointed in countries and in dioceses.

## Readiness to Change

Q. This is a system to carry out the teaching of the Constitution?

A. Liturgical reform cannot come overnight. To have a reform, it must be understood.

Q. Do you think our priests and people do understand?

A. All this is somewhat novel to the people, even though Pope Pius X started liturgy reforms back more than 50 years ago. He talked about the liturgy and the importance of it; and few paid sufficient attention. That is why we had to have a council now.

Q. And now the council wants to make sure we pay attention?

A. It will depend upon the bishop in each diocese, but I don't think there is any question about the readiness to accept it. But the soul, the spirit of the reform, the spirit of the liturgy—that is fundamental.

**Q.** So its practical effect is for the bishop, for the priest, and for the layman to learn this and to accept this?

A. In that prayer that Pope John gave us for the council, we pray that the Holy Spirit may not only guide those who are members of the Council, but that He would give us the grace to accept what the council decrees. We dare not reject the Holy Spirit. This is what we would be doing if we say that the council didn't know what it was talking about.

**Q.** How fast must this go, Your Eminence?

A. Well, it must go forthwith. That is evident from the fact that the Pope immediately promulgated the constitution. He could have waited until the end of the council. He promulgated it immediately and took steps to carry it out.

**Q.** What is needed? Education?

A. Oh, yes. Particularly instruction.

**Q.** How about experience? Some say you must experience the new liturgy changes to learn them.

A. By experiencing, by participating in it, yes, you need that. For instance, we had liturgy days for the priests in different parts of the archdiocese. We had qualified people talk to the priests from each district. And then they went over to church and celebrated Mass—a real Mass, a participated Mass, and they sang and recited together.

**Q.** That was the occasion when you gave permission for the priests to receive Communion even though they had celebrated Mass that day?

A. Yes. We did that so they would really enter fully into the liturgy of the Mass. That was done for the purpose of enabling the "Doubting Thomases" to see it in reality.

**Q.** Do you think that was effective?

A. I think so. I can't say just how much progress has been made; it may be a bit early to tell. In the first place everyone has been waiting for this new vernacular. It will come along. This can't be forced, of course, but after the Acta that the American bishops have drawn up—and it has been approved by the Holy See—after that is put into effect, we will allow a reasonable time for everything to be put into effect. But it has to be done.

**Q.** Your Eminence, as the archbishop, what is your norm in regard to allowing

Mass facing the people? Does it depend on whether the pastor convinces you that he wants this for the good of his parish?

A. Well, I'll tell you. You can do this provided there is real participation on the part of the people. In other words, I don't want the priest to be out there making these gestures and the people simply looking at him. I want all the people to be a part. I want it to be an active participation—a full participation. And furthermore, I want the priests to carry out the directive of the Constitution—that they have a homily, a sermon. They should address the people on the Gospel, on the Scriptures—give them the message that is meant for them to have on that particular day. If they'll do that and it is not just for exhibition or curiosity, then I would say go ahead.

**Q.** You don't want it to be just for show?

A. That's right. I got a report from one pastor who has had Mass facing the people. He said that in the beginning he thought some people just came to look. But after a while it settled down and he had good participation all the time. In the Constitution there is nothing about the Mass facing the people. I don't think that there is any legislation forbidding it, nor any legislation requiring it.

## Sacred Meal

**Q.** So it is not absolutely necessary to say Mass facing the people? Is that your point?

A. The priest is the leader of the people. He represents the bishop. The Church is the bishop, and his people—religious and clergy—all together. That constitutes the idea of the Church. The bishop goes to the cathedral and assembles the whole congregation to come with him and worship God. The priest at the altar exercises the office of priest in the name of the people and as a representative, you might say, of the bishop and as the head of the congregation. That is to say he is up at the altar, but—saying the Mass facing the people brings out the idea of the supper—of the meal. And also it invites the people to come together and they are more a part of it. Mass isn't something a great distance from them so they can see it only vaguely. They should see everything. And that is why when the Mass becomes more simplified—and I am

pretty sure it will—that people can understand it right away. You know that you've taken non-Catholics to church and they say "It's very impressive, but I don't know what it's about. What are they doing?" And wouldn't it be preferable if they could come to see it in a simple way. There is something about the Protestant Eucharistic worship that we have lost. They kept some of that. The Scriptural reading; the confession, or the acknowledgment of faults or their sins; and then the profession of faith; and then the repeating of words of the Last Supper; and then the participating. And while they don't have a real Sacrament, there is grace there, there is no doubt about it.

## Patient Persuasion

Q. You brought up this point about the leadership of the priest, Your Eminence. Some priests doubt that these changes will work in their parish because they say their people are older, or for other reasons.

A. Well, it will take time for them. Some people find it hard, you know.

Q. Would you say from your experience, from your talking with the clergy that it takes hard work and a great amount of leadership to succeed in this?

A. Yes. I don't think that they should just force the people. I think it is a lack of instruction. The people don't understand.

Q. Do you think liturgical changes can and should work in every parish?

A. Oh, yes. They have to. They just have to. I think they will, in time. I think if the priests really devote themselves—and they should be doing that now—we can do this well. They should be doing that now, our priests and all priests. To be candid with you, there is among our people, among our clergy—throughout the country—some slowness. You asked how long it took the bishops of the council to see the value of this. In the beginning some of our American bishops were speaking against the liturgy reforms. The spokesmen were. But right away it became evident that they were out of tune with the Church—with the whole council. As the council went on, as the discussion went on—it took a long time—a wonderful transformation took place. Nobody would have believed that there would be a hope like that in the council.

Q. It takes some discussion for understanding to come around, then?

A. Yes. It was the same in our own country when our bishops met. You'd be surprised at the vote we had in Washington.

Q. That was at the April 2 meeting of the American hierarchy?

A. Yes, where we drew up the Acta as we are required to do. I don't think there were ever any more than five or six votes against our changes. There were some speeches against the changes. But when a vote came, it was almost unanimous. So that the bishops really do realize the need for reform. They may realize, too, that it is going to be difficult to carry out. It will take time, but nevertheless they are committed to it.

## Any Exceptions?

Q. Do you see any good reason in the idea that a pastor of a parish would reserve one Mass on Sunday to be the old kind of "quiet Mass" so the people could go to that one if they didn't like the renewed liturgy?

A. I don't see that. As I said before, even wherever the priest says Mass alone—as when priests say Mass in the chapel when there is no congregation present—well, even that is a Mass with the Church. Now I would say that what we should aim for—and reasonably soon—would be that all of our Masses are said with the full participation if there are people there.

Q. In other words . . .

A. If there are just a handful of people, it wouldn't destroy the validity of the Mass to fail to have participation. But I think that we should not—only for the sake of the people's feelings—give a choice. There should be no choice of whether you want to go to a participated Mass. According to the Constitution, this is basic and fundamental.

Q. It should be in every Mass?

A. Yes. The people should have a full and conscious and active—that's the word to use—an active participation.

Q. We've had a little change recently—the "Corpus Christi, Amen." It seems to have been well accepted. Usually there have been two or three instructions for this and it is a simple rite. Now do you anticipate that this means that we can easily introduce other changes?

A. Yes, I think so. I think that is a very good illustration. Of course that change was a very simple thing. These other changes are not going to come as rapidly as you might think. They will be gradual. The post-conciliar commission adopted the principle, accepted the principle, right at the beginning, of gradualism. That doesn't sound good to us in America because we use that word to refer to the race question. But in the liturgy things should be done gradually. That's what the Church always has done. We've gotten a number of things already—like the change in the Eucharistic fast, dispensation for the evening Mass, a lot of things to make it easier for people to come to Mass and to receive Holy Communion, to participate. These have awakened and brought the people to a greater union; but those were matters that could be easily introduced.

Q. And for the more complicated changes?

A. Nobody can introduce these changes without careful instruction, study and by prayer, and by a readiness to accept guidance.

## God's Gift

Q. What about the people? What would you say to them?

A. Simply this: You must have a readiness to make these changes. You should accept what the council has decreed because it is the Holy Spirit that gives it to you. You would be rejecting grace by failing to do so. Take it in that spirit. Pray for the grace to be ready to accept.

Q. Now Your Eminence, I would like to discuss the Post-Conciliar Commission for the Liturgy. Of course, you and Archbishop Hallinan are the two American members of this 42-member international committee. What is the job of this Commission?

A. First of all, it is a permanent Commission. It is a continuing body. And it has the task of implementing the Constitution—carrying it out—executing it. The Commission has accepted the principle of doing it gradually—but at the same time not to delay.

Q. Is the Commission really moving ahead?

A. Oh yes. Of course there is a lot of work. For instance, one big job is revising all the psalms.

Q. A lot of scholarship is involved?

A. Oh yes. And then there is the structure of the Mass. The Mass is to be simplified, to make it express what it is. The outward form should easily present to the people the meaning of what is being done. So there will be many things to make the Mass more meaningful. And then there will be all the revision of all the books; the pontifical, all the ceremonies of the bishop; the ritual; the revision of the breviaries. All the liturgical books will be revised. And of course, the divine office will be revised, and will probably be made somewhat different.

Q. So we will see further changes beyond those that will start later this year?

A. We are concerned now with the vernacular, putting English into part of the Mass. Now at the last meeting of the Commission, which was in June, I was astonished to hear Archbishop Felici, the secretary, say "I speak for myself and I'm sure I speak for all of you here, that as soon as possible what has been done should be taken to the Holy Father for his approval." He wanted all the bishops to get the changes we had discussed before they came back to the council, so that they could instruct their priests—so that the priests in turn could instruct their people—and so these things could be put into effect the First Sunday of Advent.

Q. The First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 29, is the date usually cited as to when we will begin using English. Are other changes anticipated at this time?

A. Now, our vernacular may go in a little earlier. I haven't heard yet when we are going to get the other changes. It may be that the Pope would say, "Let's not be so hasty."

Q. Changes like what?

A. Well, like omitting the psalm (in the prayers at the foot of the altar) at the beginning of Mass. We would continue to say the Confiteor at the foot of the altar. Other changes will be to omit the Last Gospel and the prayers after Mass.

Q. And you believe that these will come soon?

A. These are changes that were passed. We approved a number of things, like permission to receive Communion under both species of bread and wine and concelebration.

**Q.** Might we have any of these by Advent of this year?

A. It could be; it could be. That these changes are permitted is a fact in the constitution. What is required now is a ritual, an approved rubrics for them. For instance, concelebration—how must it be done? how should the priests be vested? vested as they would be if they were the only celebrant? or should they be just in an alb? what action should they take? will they say all the words of the Canon or just part? All these details have to be worked out.

**Q.** Is there any chance that the vernacular — that is, the English parts of the Mass that have been approved and are now published — is there any chance that it will go into effect generally in the United States before Advent?

A. Two dioceses have already started. They can do that. I could do it now, strictly speaking. But the bishops had a gentleman's agreement in Washington that no one would start until we were all ready.

## Liturgical Books

**Q.** This was to wait until the proper translations for the altar missals were published, right?

A. Yes, Archbishop Dearden (the chairman), thought it would be confusing if everybody was using a different translation. Later on it would be hard to bring it all together. So we said, "Let's wait and do things orderly," which I think is all right. The two dioceses that have started, Winona, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin, probably just thought, "Why wait? We've got permission to go ahead. The Acta has been approved and no date was given by the Holy See. It is up to us. We can put this into effect right away."

**Q.** Of course, during Liturgical Week here in St. Louis all the Masses will be as they will be throughout the country later in the year — that is, with the English vernacular, is that correct?

A. In the vernacular, yes. I said we could do that because I didn't look upon that as jumping the gun. I thought it would be good instruction, an illustration for those attending.

**Q.** Back to the Commission itself. How will future changes come? Do they go to

the Pope for approval and then promulgation?

A. That's right. The chairman, Cardinal Lercaro has a meeting with the Pope and tells him what has transpired and gets his approval. Then it will be the business of the Commission to announce it.

**Q.** Would these be general changes, Your Eminence? For the whole Latin Rite.

A. Yes. The whole Latin Rite. If there is anything that is basic or fundamental, you might say, it could affect other rites, too.

**Q.** Will there be specific permissions, too?

A. There will be. As provided for in the constitution. For instance, the bishops in mission lands might ask for some particular exceptions.

**Q.** They might petition for something to the Commission. The Commission would approve it, and with the Pope's approval . . . ?

A. Yes, because they want the liturgy to reflect more the culture of the people. Since it is the participation of the people that is important. The liturgy should be in sympathy—I mean the form of the liturgy should be in sympathy—with the culture of the people. A simple thing like vestments would be an example. In China, I believe, white instead of black is the mourning color. Another would be music which might be closer to the cultures in the mission lands such as India, China, Africa.

## National Commissions

**Q.** Is the Commission satisfied with the worldwide acceptance and programs of carrying out the Constitution?

A. I think so. Yes. I am surprised that we have not had more countries who have had their Acta approved—decrees on their decisions. A great deal now is left to the national group of bishops.

**Q.** The national groups of bishops have more latitude now?

A. That's right. A conference of bishops asks the Holy See, or tells the Holy See, what they would like to do with this or that portion of the liturgy. The Holy See would want to go along with that, because everyone realizes that you can't bring about uniformity in the whole world on some of these things. Forcing uniformity would be a mistake. It depends on the particular countries.

**Q.** Our American bishops moved pretty fast, didn't they?

A. Yes we did. Well, yet not too fast. We didn't meet until April. We could have met in January or February. The French bishops went faster, but then they had to slow down. An English bishop, Archbishop Francis Grimshaw of Birmingham, sits next to me on the Commission. Naturally we have a great deal in common because we talk the same language. Well, he claimed England got certain things we didn't get—for instance, the Collect, the Secret, and the Postcommunion in English. But to get that, the English had to invoke another number of the statute. Archbishop Dearden didn't want to do that, because asking for the general things and also some special considerations would have slowed down the process.

**Q.** Then that explains why we will still retain such short prayers as the Collect and Postcommunion in Latin?

A. Yes. Archbishop Dearden wanted to ask for the things the constitution already granted, that all the bishops already had a right to. Then, these special things we could bring up later. And that was the way it worked out. Archbishop Grimshaw just got his approval in June, but even then with a contingency. His permission for the Collect and Secret and Postcommunion was based on when the text of the translation was submitted to the Commission.

**Q.** Your Eminence, I'd like to ask only this in addition. You are the host archbishop for Liturgical Week this month. What do you think the people will get from coming and attending this meeting?

A. Well, they will get instruction. And secondly, they will get demonstration. I think they will get an insight as to what is

meant by the liturgy, and about the promotion of the liturgy—the meaning of it. The first question you asked was, why all these changes? Liturgical Week is going to bring people here that are really qualified and they will transmit a lot of information and understanding about all of this. These people are really the pioneers in this whole field. And then there will also be the Masses. People will have celebration of Mass perhaps in a more perfect way than they would in their own parishes.

**Q.** You would recommend that the people attend the Mass on each day?

A. Yes. Each one will be facing the people. I am to say the one on the feast of St. Louis. I think the priests particularly ought to get a lot from attending the meeting. I expect the priests to come in great numbers.

**Q.** This will help them in what they must do to instruct the people?

A. Definitely. I am going to try in a letter to the priests of the archdiocese to call attention to some of the things in the Constitution on the Liturgy. The Constitution very definitely indicates that unless they demonstrate a zeal in regard to the reform of the liturgy, to the promotion of the liturgy, they are failing in their duty as a dispenser of the mysteries of Christ.

**Q.** And the lay people?

A. The layman has got to work at this, too. Particularly our informed laity, our leaders. Oh, this is so evident that the structure of the Mass is such that it demands participation. We have just been closing our eyes to it; and the way so much has been set up allowed us to miss the whole idea. But the responses are there. The Mass demands that we all join in.

**Q.** Cardinal Ritter, thank you.

## REVELATION

*Revelation is more than the unfolding of religious truth. It is God unveiling his personality under the impulse of intense love and coming into personal communion with man. Through the biblical, liturgical, witness and doctrinal signs God comes to believers.*

*Pastoral Catechetics*

# Let Laymen Instruct!

Father Bernard F. Wheel

"Father, remember Rose M., who went to convert classes last year and was baptized in the spring? Well, I saw in the paper Tuesday that she was married outside the Church. She didn't practice the Faith much anyway, after she became a Catholic."

Father's spirits dropped. No priest likes to hear how he failed, especially in teaching a convert, who — traditionally — is supposed to become an excellent Catholic.

Yet the priest is not totally to blame for such failures. His tasks are too diverse; his instruction work with so many converts makes it impossible for him to be responsible for each one individually. Nor does it seem fair to require a godparent — called only after the priest has finished private instructions — to be responsible for a convert's success or failure in the spiritual life.

Perhaps present programs of instruction are to blame. The majority of them don't provide any substantial follow-up on converts, who are left to their own devices after reception into the Church.

Of the numerous Catholic converts in the United States last year, how many will leave the Church within the next few months? Priests are fearful. Godparents are anxious. All of them know that some, maybe many, will lose their new-found Faith.

One way has been found to check the steady leakage. It was inaugurated less than three years ago, as a sort of pilot program in Christ the King parish of Rutland, Vermont, where the responsibility for convert work is being placed more and more on the shoulders of the layman.

Church ritual itself suggested the solution. The layman is made sponsor at Baptism. Why not, then, let the layman instruct?

One idea went something like this: "Make the sponsor active in the entire religious formation. Let each individual convert have

his own catechist or teacher all along the path into the Church. The priest doesn't have to give the course of instruction, the layman can do it!"

And in Rutland today, the layman does just that. He becomes personal teacher and guide, as well as sponsor, when a former non-Catholic embraces the Faith. Results to date: converts up 30 per cent; leakage down to a trickle.

With few exceptions, instructing in the fundamental truths and practices of the Faith in our country has been the exclusive domain of the priest. However, recent experience is not only changing this attitude but also proving that the layman has a legitimate place, if not foremost place, in this basic, apostolic work.

We always had converts in Christ the King parish, but never was there so much interest shown in the work involved as there is now with laymen instructing.

Though the regular Confraternity Inquiry Program can handle large groups of inquirers at one time, its classroom atmosphere has that unavoidable formality and division of teacher-attention among many students. In our new program, when the Catholic tutors in the home of the non-Catholic, the catechumen is at ease and the catechist is helped to see himself as a real apostle. Men especially favor this home study with tutor, and neither men nor women say they would want to go back to the classroom for this instruction.

What has been the reaction of the parishioners involved? Overwhelmingly favorable. "This is the best thing that ever happened to me." "I never dreamed I would do such a thing."

The wife of a man taking instructions mentions that her husband Paul and his teacher John "are doing just wonderfully.

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Courtesy of *The Catholic Layman*, where this article originally appeared, issue of June 1964.

I've never seen Paul so happy. They've become really good friends—John even helped us move into our new home. And his wife and children visit us often."

From a teacher comes this note: "Many thanks for giving me the opportunity to participate in the catechist-catechumen (teacher-student) endeavor. It certainly gave this old soul a lift to see Jean baptized. Think of me if you come across another potential catechumen, because I enjoyed every minute of it."

## Source Material

One of the most common misgivings of the selected catechist, "I won't know what to do!" is dispelled by our lesson plan for the 25 classes, the material for testing the catechumen, and the reference books. The articulate Catholic layman need not feel unchallenged by so much prepared material. He "is not an official handing out packaged answers," as author-publisher Frank Sheed has put it; "He is a human being, entering into personal communication with another human being who, by asking questions about religion, has invited the Catholic into his most private thoughts."

"It's not difficult once you get the hang of it" one catechist has said, "but an enjoyable challenge to prepare well."

Even so, I can still see the astonished look on my parishioner Mary's face when I asked her to be a tutor: "Mary, I want you to instruct Marilyn and help her become a Catholic. She has no religion now. You're going to be somewhat on your own in this, but I know you can do it."

Her immediate reaction was, "Father, you're kidding." She did not realize it then, but Mary had the necessary, preliminary training for this work: active membership in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Discussion Club. For us, the Discussion Club, where members are learning to talk religion in a disciplined manner, has become the training ground of potential catechists. So I was confident of Mary's ability to instruct Marilyn. They are about the same age and in about the same situation in life. A well-informed Catholic, Mary lives her religion by frequent reception of the sacraments and by performing good works. No other special talents are demanded of our teachers.

A byword among us: "The catechist must pray and work for the catechumen and the catechumen must pray and work for the catechist, if either is to be successful in the work of conversions." Therefore, the catechumen is expected to pray daily and to go to Mass weekly from the very beginning of his instructions.

Our trust in Mary and all the other teachers has effected a harvest of zealous, new Catholics, some of whom would like to give instructions in their turn. But until our converts become well-confirmed in the Faith — through constant use of the sacraments, involvement in parish programs (especially the Discussion Club) and by prayer — they must wait.

Much of our present assurance was gained through trial and error. For example, we once made the mistake of asking a weak Catholic to be a catechist; we believed the experience would strengthen her Faith. But we were wrong. The outcome was that we lost the potential convert. And the assignment didn't help the Catholic at all, for she became discouraged by trying to do something beyond her interest and abilities. The frequent observation that "This work helps the teacher as much as the student" is no rationale for using poorly equipped teachers.

## Two Advantages

For the catechist there are two benefits available from person-to-person instruction. First, an outlet for knowledge accumulated in Confraternity programs. So many parishioners used to ask: "Anything else I can do, Father?" Today this latent energy and knowledge are channeled into teaching would-be Catholics. The parishioner is told: "You'll have to spend about two hours preparing each class from the written guide, plus one hour giving your weekly instruction." A second result is increased interest in convert work and the missionary apostolate of the Church. Now the parishioner who instructs acts as support as well as cushion to the convert, whereas formerly, parishioners left most converts alone to adjust to Catholic living.

It was in August of 1961 that our first catechist went to the home of the first catechumen for class number one in the pilot program. Reception of that convert took

place six months later; by then we were so pleased with the effectiveness and potential of our laymen that we had united another 13 teams. To this date we've had 70 sets of catechists and catechumens.

Not all these private classes have been "successful." A small number of the catechumens made the decision: "No, I don't want to be received into the Church yet." We admit it may be easier for such people to say "no" to a layman than to a priest. If so, our approach is providential: it reduces the incidence of fallen-away converts. But insofar as that "no" is provisional, catechists go on praying and befriending catechumens; they are not forgotten by the Church.

## Careful Selection

Trying to find the right teacher or sponsor is the job of the priest. One blunder, already related, made in this regard led to mutual disinterest of student and teacher, and instructions came to a halt. There are no hard and fast rules about matching; circumstances set the stage. Still the priest must look for compatibility: a housewife instructs a housewife, a laborer teaches a laborer, and a professional is guide for a professional. An exception to the match-game: we always have adults instruct youngsters.

A recent review in *Guide*, Paulist publication of the Institute for Religious Research, called our program "provocative and exciting." Written by Father James Lloyd, the review points out: "Minimum 'lay apostolate' . . . is not enough for the zealous and capable lay people whose number is increasing each year"; he gives his support to the lay-instructor concept, calls the program "something which really works." Father Lloyd also cites the instruction outline's "kerygmatic factor," its "liberal use . . . of the liturgical life of the Church as well as constant use of Scripture."

Kneeling together in the intimacy of prayer, both catechist and catechumen overcome the anxious moments of their first class, the Our Father (read from Canon in the missal) binding them in the initial gesture of true Christian friendship. "I knelt," reported one parishioner, "it was the only

thing to keep my knees from shaking. They didn't shake after that — oh, what power has prayer." All anxiety is gone by the time a team reports to the program chairman on its progress. Of course we priests of the parish check constantly on the teams also, and periodically plan get-togethers for them.

I remember at one gathering ("general sessions" we call them) for the edification of the students, we had a few brave souls make "public confessions." "Confess publicly?" The teachers were shocked. Then I handed them a script of their "sins" to read, and they did fine.

It's good to see the catechists and catechumens share their experiences at these informal, coffee-and-talk sessions. As a priest, on these occasions I absorb and am inspired by the enthusiasm laymen manifest. I hear of their failures, yes—but for every one reported there are a dozen joys: "Father, my catechumen missed Mass last Sunday." "I think my catechumen's family is getting interested in the Faith too!" "This is the first time I really know someone is praying for me."

You can't beat comments of this kind nor the everyday, good Christian people who utter them.

## Priestly Concern

Because he ultimately judges the worthiness of candidates for reception into the Church, the priest must keep close tabs on the progress of each team. After a final visit with him, a date is set, and the catechumen, with a parishioner's hand resting firmly on his shoulder, becomes a Catholic.

We feel spiritually enriched by our convert program in Christ the King parish. God has blessed us with converts—treasures for Christ—over whom we've placed a special guard in the person of the lay catechist and sponsor to help us keep them.

Our Bishop, Robert F. Joyce, gave his blessing to our laymen and encourages them in this apostolic work. Other parishes now are experimentally using their laymen as personal instructors of interested non-Catholics; reports indicate the program is growing. One day, perhaps, it will be common practice in parishes throughout the country to let the layman instruct.

# Books Received

The Church's Worship

J. B. Crichton

*Sheed and Ward.* \$6.00

Father Crichton's book is an informed, readable commentary on the new liturgical constitution and the writer is admirably fitted for this task. He is editor of *Liturgy*, the distinguished quarterly; and he has won eminence as an active pastor, a working catechist and as a theologian of the new school. For decades he has used his talents to dispel the misunderstandings and outright hostility to liturgical reform that so frequently characterized English-speaking Catholicism in the recent past. His entire career helps to make him a helpful guide to the new Constitution.

After giving the pertinent articles of the Constitution, the author follows with his concise, lucid commentary. He keeps in mind the primary need of a change of mind and heart regarding the nature of worship, a grasp of the basic principles underlying the changes, and the historical background to specific reform. While scholars will applaud his work, it was written for the average Catholic priest, religious and lay person.

Relatively few Catholics have been able to keep abreast of the rapid changes that have enriched Catholic thought and practice in recent decades. Theology, scripture, liturgy and catechetics have all seen immense advance. Father Crichton, in discussing the new procedures is at pains to explain their theological implications and the best insights of contemporary Catholicism in these fields.

Priests, catechists and the ordinary worshiper will find illuminating paragraphs on a wide variety of words and phrases that are slowly taking their place again in our household vocabulary. Words like "mystery," "homily," "People of God" and many others are clarified. And the writer's pastoral concern is evident in his treatment of

matters like the Church as "sacrament," the "Paschal Mystery," and why the liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life and work.

One might have wished for a fuller treatment of matters like the Office in the spiritual life of the laity and on the delicate matter of concelebration. But for a short work, it is remarkably complete and satisfying.

Priest and Worker (The Autobiography of Henri Perrin).

Bernard Wall, translator.

*Holt, Rinehart and Winston.* \$4.95

Curiously enough, the appearance of this new book coincides with the publishing of another book by the well known Michael de Saint-Pierre attacking the priest-worker movement for allowing itself to be captured by the Communists. Adding spice to this controversy was the vehement pronouncement, last July, by some priests who defied episcopal instructions to relinquish their jobs and life among the workers some ten years ago. In a message to the bishops at the Council, they charged that the Church had become so closely allied to the capitalistic system that it was impossible to effect any vital contact with working men.

Henri Perrin was a pioneer French priest-worker who was appalled at the extent to which French workers were estranged from Christ and the Church. Conventional parish structures and the anemic religious faith and practice of many middle-class Catholics held little attraction and provoked deep hostility. Perrin, along with some two hundred diocesan and order priests, took jobs and lived in the hovels of the poor. Their motive was completely evangelical and their principle was to meet God's poor where they live and work.

The story is deeply moving and it reveals some of the inescapable problems that arise whenever the Church really meets the world.

Father Perrin's correspondence, diaries and reports — unified by brief comments by the translator — constitute an absorbing story of his ideals, spiritual life and daily joys and complexities.

Readings in  
Sacramental Theology  
C. Stephen Sullivan, F.S.C.  
*Prentice Hall*. \$2.95

This is a companion piece to another Prentice Hall publication, *Studies in Salvation History*. They are both primarily intended for the college student who has no intention of becoming a professional theologian but who does manifest a growing interest in recent doctrinal developments. This concern has been deepened by recent theological change and makes imperative an acquaintance with the theological basis of Catholic worship.

The papers that make up the present volume are all outstanding and some were the highlights of Catholic conventions in recent years. All but one were delivered at annual conventions of the Liturgical Conference, the Catholic Theological Society and the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine.

Sacramental theology has been enormously enriched in the last decade by the labors of our best theologians. If it were not for this immense effort, it is difficult to imagine how the recent Constitution on the Liturgy could have been written. And some of the most striking speeches at the Council reveal the extent to which our deeper appreciation of the sacraments dominates contemporary Catholicism.

In the fifteen carefully selected papers of this valuable collection, by American scholars of distinction, we are given some of the richest of these new insights. They constitute a treasury of information for all who preach, teach or wish to know better the religion of Christ.

The Church  
Cardinal Montini (Pope Paul VI)  
*Helicon*. \$5.50

Here are some ten talks, presumably all given when the present pope was Archbishop at Milan. They are assembled in two sections. The first is concerned with the

nature and mission of the Church. The second deals with the role of ecumenical councils in the life of Christ's Church.

The volume reveals the preoccupations of a sensitive, highly gifted man who never ceased to try to penetrate the mystery of the Church to which he dedicated his strength and talents. And from the footnotes we can reconstruct the sources on which he meditated. The Fathers of the Church, Congar, Küng, De Lubac, Newman —these and others gave him insights which he made his own and developed richly.

His approach, style and temperament differ from those of his predecessor John XXIII. And it might not be unfair to say that he is a moderate progressive in tendencies. But there is no question about his realization of the need for reform, his openness to dialogue with non-Catholic Christians and with the world outside Christianity. Although he is reticent about biographical details, there is no concealing his commitment to the aggiornamento he has pledged himself to continue.

## GUIDE

- A publication of the Paulist Institute for Religious Research.
- Officers: Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P., Director. George C. Hagmaier, C.S.P., Associate Director. Editor of *Guide*, John T. McGinn, C.S.P.
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## GUIDE

411 West 59th Street  
New York 19, New York

# Guide Lights

## A PARISH CATECHUMENATE . . .

Until fairly recently, the non-Catholic apostolate in the parish has consisted pretty much of an instruction program. The core of it is the inquiry class which has developed and prospered so that it is now a proven tool of the apostolate. However, like everything else, it has its limitations. Most of those engaged in non-Catholic work are dissatisfied with the after care of converts. Others feel that more depth is needed in a program which must form as well as inform new Catholics. Fortunately, more resources are available today than ever before and it is apparent that we are now on the threshold of a real breakthrough in this apostolate.

The biblical movement has already taught us to use the Church's textbook as our own and to shape our instructions around the events of salvation history. The liturgical movement and its culmination in the new Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is opening up more of the pedagogical riches of Catholic worship. Now, the catechists are leading us toward a restoration of some form of the ancient catechumenate in which a person coming to the Church is immersed in Catholic life and teaching through a variety of activities even as he is being prepared for baptism. There is every reason to hope that such a parish catechumenate will fill up the shortcomings which have been noted in the inquiry program and will provide that formation in depth which a person must have to live a vigorous Christian life in the world today.

I have been speaking in the future tense because I don't believe we have quite reached the moment of truth as yet. Most of the ingredients for a real catechumenate are at hand: a heightened biblical perspective, an increasing activation of liturgical life, a sharpened catechetical appreciation of what is needed to make a Christian. What is still lacking, I think, is the rich parochial soil in which these shoots can take root. Catholics generally need to absorb the nourishment now provided them by a vitalized liturgy and, still to come, the preaching of Vatican II's enlarged vision of the Church. This takes time. No one knows this better than the pastors who are presently devoted to this task. Hope-

fully, however, the end result will be a new sense of community and mission among Catholics so that the life and activities of a parish will be the kind of vital trunk into which new branches may be lovingly engrafted. When that happens, we will have a real parish catechumenate.

## INTERIM INQUIRY PROGRAM . . .

While this kind of parish catechumenate is still some way off, nevertheless its shadow is already upon us and should exert some influence on present operations. Looking ahead, it seems certain that some form of class instruction will be basic to the catechumenate for the foreseeable future. It will not, however, be the total agent of catechesis that it is now. Liturgy and parish life generally will assume much more prominence and the period of preparation will surely be lengthened. What happens then to the class instruction? Meeting recently in Washington with a group of priests who are active in this work, I discover a willingness to experiment with the format and the length of instructions. There is a tendency toward decreasing the number of class instructions while at the same time lengthening the time of preparation and including more formative, if less formal, procedures. Participation in the liturgy, bible devotions, spiritual conferences, directed reading, exposure to Catholic family life—these are the kind of things that were suggested to fill the present gaps in the formation of a Christian.

We have a long way to go toward a real catechumenate but it is not too soon to make a start. A modest step might be to combine elements of a parish renewal program with the inquiry class. Take, for example, the practice of the parish Information Forum conducted by laymen from the Institute of Lay Theology at the University of San Francisco. This program for adult Catholics and non-Catholics consists of a 10-12 week lecture and discussion series held four times a year. The object of the series is to present a challenging statement of the Christian message. In the case of Catholics, it is really a restatement of Catholic faith in terms of Vatican II and aims at awakening in them a deeper commitment. This might be a good place in

which to present the formal instruction part of his catechesis to the non-Catholic inquirer. All of the essential matter could be covered in such a series and then the assimilation into Catholic life and thought could develop along more flexible avenues. The Catholics who sit side by side with the inquirer could take an active part in his formation. They would be imbibing a sense of mission and purpose from the instruction and would have much to give him out of their own renewal. At the same time they could act as a natural door to the parish community he is about to enter. In such a program the instructor would be killing two birds with one stone as he would actually be forming both vine and branches at the same time.

This is but one possible adaptation that might be undertaken now to build toward the full parish catechumenate of the future. No doubt other adaptations will suggest themselves. The important thing is to bring to the evolving catechumenate what has been the best in inquiry class experience.

#### CURSILLO TECHNIQUES . . .

At this same meeting, Father Thomas Dove, C.S.P., of St. Rose of Lima parish, Layton, Utah, reported on an interesting adaptation of Cursillo techniques in his inquiry class. Instead of the usual classroom setup he uses tables, dividing the class into groups of ten with two lay instructors at each table. Following the actual instruction which lasts one hour, there is group discussion and a group project at each table. Out of this comes a group summary of the lesson in both verbal and poster form. Every member of each group is expected to contribute in some way to these projects and it is the responsibility of the lay instructors to draw out the laggards. The results of each group effort is then presented by a spokesman from that table to the whole class for comment and criticism. Father Dove reports an enthusiastic class response and quick progress in participation by even the most timid inquirers. This might be the answer to the old problem of how to get the inquirer to participate more fully in the class. You don't have to have made a Cursillo to do this, but you may want to after you have tried it.

#### RE-EVALUATING A PROGRAM . . .

Up until recently the Radio-TV Apostolate of the Archdiocese of St. Louis carried a regular TV show called "ASK A PRIEST." The format of the program was a trial in which a prosecuting attorney

cross-examined a priest-defendant on some point of the faith. It was a variation of the pulpit dialogue technique used to get across information and apologetic for the Catholic Church. The program has now been discontinued. The reason given by the Radio-TV director, Father Francis J. Matthews, is that this kind of format is out of step with the spirit of Vatican II. Most would agree that the adversary stance of the Church in a trial setting is too polemical a presentation today. The climate has changed so much that the present need is less for the Church to defend herself, than that she should dialogue with interested and respectful partners.

More than one Father at the Vatican Council has suggested that the bones of the martyrs are not the only relics revered by the Church. The kind of mature appraisal of existing techniques that has occurred in St. Louis in this case should help eliminate similar observations in Vatican III. There are probably a number of other items in our bridges to non-Catholics which served the Church well under different conditions but which could be profitably re-appraised today. Pope John's spirit of renewal is a continuing challenge to every apostolate.

#### CHRISTIAN UNITY AWARD . . .

The Christian Unity Award of the Graymoor Friars was given this year jointly to Archbishop Lawrence J. Shehan of Baltimore and Monsignor Joseph Nelligan, chairman of the Commission on Unity of that archdiocese. Archbishop Shehan initiated the first diocesan-wide ecumenical program in the United States, and Msgr. Nelligan has supervised its execution from the beginning. Our congratulations to both!

#### DECREE ON ECUMENISM . . .

The new decrees on *Ecumenism* and on the *Church* (along with the earlier one on the *Liturgy*) are among the great gifts of the Holy Spirit granted through the labors of the bishops and theologians at the Second Vatican Council. All three documents will have immense influence on the Catholic life and apostolate. A paragraph in the decree on Ecumenism should answer a common misunderstanding: "It should be evident that, when individuals wish for full Catholic communion, their preparation and reconciliation is an undertaking which of its nature is distinct from ecumenical action. But there is no opposition between the two since both proceed from the marvelous ways of God."

JOSEPH V. GALLAGHER, C.S.P.

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